

LONGBRIDGE & WEST HEATH WARD MEETING NOTES

WARD: Longbridge & West Heath	DATE: 20 January 2020
VENUE: St John the Baptist Church, Longbridge Lane	START/FINISH TIMES: 7pm – 9.05pm
COUNCILLORS Debbie Clancy & Brett O'Reilly (Chair)	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 30
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Sergeant David Lamerton, West Midlands Police Mel Cotton, Public Health Crew Commander Paul Orme, West Midlands Fire Service Peter Edwards, Principal CAZ Officer	Apology – Gary Sambrook M.P.

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING:

1. Police Update

Sergeant Lamerton provided the following update;

- The team had now re-located to Northfield Fire Station. The team was currently reduced to 2 PC's but part of the ward was covered by the Kings Norton team
- Total recorded crime remained at a steady level with burglaries down 20% & public place violence down 15%. Robberies were however up by 57% compared to the same time last year (49 offences up to 77) & the majority were youth on youth offences
- Northfield Town Centre – the team had been enforcing the PSPO, issuing numerous FPN & breach orders. BCC was taking the hard core drinkers to court but were working with them around rehabilitation
- Knife arch, Turves Green Boys School – no weapons found
- Force Traffic team had been in the area before Christmas undertaking drink/drive stops

- He would be retiring at the end of the month and his replacement would be Sergeant David Taylor and he would recommend that he continue to support the ward meeting

In response to concerns raised by Councillor Clancy regarding Longbridge Town Centre Sgt Lamerton said that it was covered by the Longbridge Neighbourhood Team. That team had connections & worked with the college but he was aware of recent repeat youth ASB issues that had not related to college students but to local residents. In these instances the team tried to work proactively with parents in the first instance but would use notices and injunctions if necessary. Input was also sought from the local housing team if they were tenants.

Councillor Clancy and Councillor O'Reilly thanked Sergeant Lamerton for the work he had undertaken in the ward and his continued engagement with this meeting and wished him a long and happy retirement.

2. Fire Service Update

Crew Commander Paul Orme advised the meeting that it was his intention to regularly attend the ward meeting and provide updates. He explained that there were 4 Watches at the station each covering a different ward and White Watch covered Longbridge & West Heath.

Residents welcomed regular updates and information which could be passed on through residents associations and reach a wider audience.

A resident made reference to the 'Poets Blocks' and an issue with the sprinkler system which had not been connected for 3 months. Until advised recently by residents WMFS had believed the system to be working. The rubbish chutes in the blocks were a constant problem as they continually blocked. WMFS had contacted BCC to advise but no action had been taken, despite the council being aware of the issue with the chutes and what was blocking them. It was also felt that the gas pipes on the outside of the building were a potential fire risk & this had also been raised with BCC and Fortem but the resident's concerns were not being heard.

Paul said he was not aware of the sprinkler problem and whilst this would not alter WMFS response he would raise it with Fortem & arrange a visit with the site manager. He also undertook to take up the matter with the blocked chutes.

Councillor O'Reilly suggested arranging a walk about for the councillors with officers so that they could see the issues mentioned

ACTION: Councillors to arrange walk about to Poets blocks

ACTION: Councillor Clancy advised that Martin Tolley was looking into the disposal of rubbish and she would contact him and request action.

ACTION: At the request of the meeting Martin Tolley & housing officer (and any other appropriate officers) to be invited to the next meeting to discuss the management of tower blocks.

Paul Orme advised that WMFS could access homes through the Safe & Well checks and so could also advise tenants on waste disposal. He could arrange a letter drop if that would assist.

3. Clean Air Zone Update

Peter Edwards outlined the reasons for the introduction of the CAZ and emphasised that it was not a congestion charge and that only non-compliant vehicles would be charged for entering the zone. The start of the CAZ had been delayed and was now due to commence in July. There would be a range of exemptions for people living/working in the zone, community vehicles, emergency vehicles and support for businesses. Other measures included scrappage incentives or assistance with public transport costs.

Residents then made the following points;

- Residents living in Longbridge and the surrounding areas had further to travel to get into the city centre and so what measures had the council put in place to ensure they could travel comfortably and reliably on public transport rather than in cars.
- A reliable and joined up public transport system needed to be introduced in Birmingham before the introduction of the CAZ & buses and trains needed to join up
- Would blue badge holders be exempt from the charge?
- The park & ride facility at Longbridge Station was not free as originally proposed and rail fares had increased which did not act as an incentive to use trains into the city. Bus services were unreliable and the journey lengthy.
- Concern regarding the effect on small businesses that needed to access the city centre.
- Concern regarding the effect on disabled and elderly people who could not use public transport and also whether city centre attractions/amenities would be adversely affected.
- Buses did not terminate in the city centre but in Carrs Lane which was too far to walk into the main areas if you had a mobility issue. Bus routes needed to be altered to reflect this.

In response to comments Peter advised that BCC did not control public transport but reported that the train station would be upgraded at the end of next year to ensure 6 carriages could be accommodated. The money collected through the CAZ was ring fenced to be used on transport improvements & controlled parking etc on the outskirts of the CAZ. With regard to bus route changes there was a public consultation on the public realm in the city centre and it was important that such concerns were fed into that. With regard to Blue Badge holders they would not be exempt but modified cars were.

There was further discussion regarding the need for improvements & better access to public transport and the charge to park at Longbridge Station acting as a deterrent and it was agreed

ACTION: that a representative from Transport for West Midlands be invited to the next meeting to talk about the Park & Ride.

4. Birmingham Food Conversation

Mel Coton briefly outlined the concept of the Birmingham Food Conversation which was looking at how the food offer across the city could be improved and referred residents to the survey on line seeking opinions on food, cooking and buying food.

In response to a question the meeting was advised that this was a year-long conversation which would help create a strategy to guide changes with businesses, caterers etc to help make food healthier, more affordable & more accessible.

Residents welcomed the idea behind the conversation and suggested involving schools in the survey to find out about young people's eating habits directly from them. The number of take aways on local high streets was seen as an issue and stricter planning regulations were felt to be necessary. Councillor Clancy agreed with views on fast food outlets and advised that she objected to any new applications submitted in the ward and added that education was key to addressing healthy eating.

In response to a question from Councillor Clancy regarding feedback following the data collection the meeting was advised that Birmingham had been allocated a grant to undertake the project as little was known about food in Birmingham and the survey would help to fill gaps and move forward with a strategy. In response to a question regarding the cost Mel undertook to find out and report back to the councillors.

Councillor O'Reilly asked for an update on the progress to a future meeting.

5. Residents Issues/Updates

- a) **Poets Blocks – Maintenance Work** – in response to concerns raised regarding pending survey work in respect of the balconies not yet being carried out and a general lack of communication – **ACTION – Councillors to pursue**
- b) **Garden Waste Bins** – residents made reference to difficulties applying for a garden waste bin if unable to apply on line and that although it could be done over the phone at a library the application could not be made via a private phone call. Councillor O'Reilly advised residents to let councillors know if they were experiencing problems and that they would remind the call centre to provide advice to those with no computer access.
- c) **Pot Holes** – end of slip road at Longbridge Lane by Central Avenue & Kingswood Road reported
- d) **Parking issues** – school parking on Clunbury Road near to flats causing obstruction & making it difficult for buses to get through. Cllr O'Reilly mentioned school exclusion zones and said he would volunteer the school for inclusion.
- e) **On street rubbish bins** – in response to a request for reinstatement of the bins on Alvechurch Road & Longbridge Lane Councillor O'Reilly said they had been reinstated on Exe Croft & in West Heath but he would look into the request for the roads mentioned
- f) **BP Garage** – reference made to the previous meeting and that the blue container was still in situ and water was running from it causing icy patches in Robinsfield Drive and outside the medical centre. Cllr Clancy said she had reported it but as a temporary structure Planning officers had advised that there was no action they could take. Cllr O'Reilly said that he would contact Morrisons to see if there was any action they could take.
- g) **Longbridge Lane/Coombes Lane/Grovelly Lane** – it was reported that this junction was still a cause for concern as motorists were using the middle lane to overtake and this had caused a 'near miss' recently when a car had been forced onto the footpath due to an overtaking vehicle.

6. Date of Next Meeting

30 March at 7pm at St John the Baptist Church, Longbridge Lane

Councillors (s) Signed:

Councillor(s) Name(s) (please print):